

Polluting the Delray neighborhood

"In the southwest riverfront area, health problems with relation to pollution should be given particular attention."

— Detroit City Master Plan

The Delray neighborhood in southwest Detroit has the worst air pollution in Michigan — a soup of dust and soot, sulfur dioxide, lead, mercury and more — all coming from the heaviest concentration of industry anywhere in the state. Three hazardous waste facilities have been proposed for the area, and at least four sites are contaminated by toxic chemicals. Major polluters in Delray and on its borders:

1. Marblehead Lime, River Rouge. Lime manufacturer emitting dust and solids.

2. Marblehead Lime, 9785 Brennan. Same as above.

3. City of Detroit sewage treatment plant, 9300 W. Jefferson. Long a source of foul odors, the plant is under court order to clean up smoke from its 14 sludge incinerators, which in 1987 spewed about 370,000 pounds of fine particles into the air.

4. Darling and Co., 700 Leigh Ave. Another long-time source of foul odors under previous owners, the rendering plant in the past processed animal parts but county officials say it is now only supposed to process fats. Odor complaints continue.

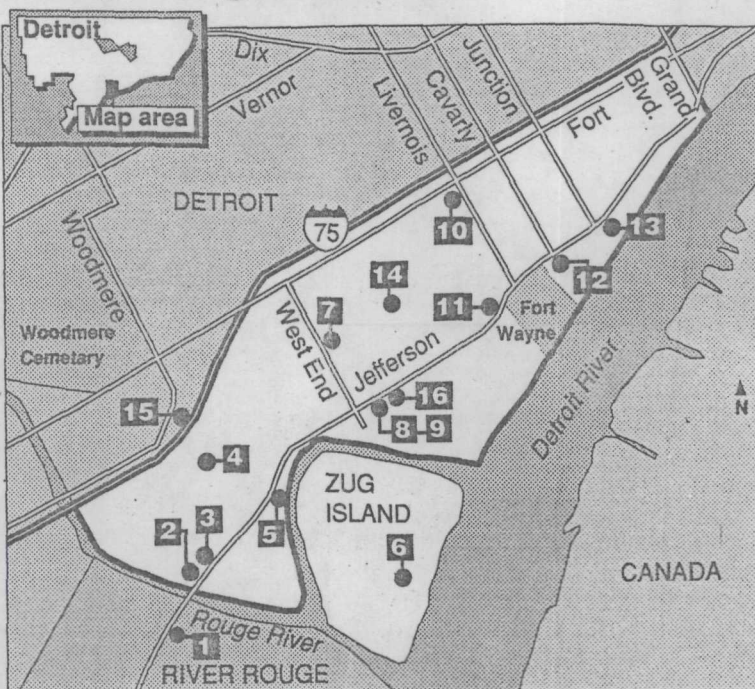
5. Detroit River Paper, 9125 W. Jefferson. Paper mill emitting dust and solids.

6. National Steel Corp.'s Great Lakes Steel Division, on Zug Island adjacent to Delray. In 1987, the steel plant released 2.4 million pounds of hazardous air pollutants, including 645,000 pounds of possible cancer-causing agents. The island itself is a hazardous waste site, contaminated with asbestos and oils.

7. National Chemical Services, 312 West End St. Proposed facility would be allowed to store and treat about 70,000 gallons a day of hazardous wastes, primarily acids.

8. Allied Signal, 1200 Zug Island Road. The tar manufacturer was responsible for 40,384 pounds of air pollution, including 11,033 pounds of carcinogens, in 1987.

9. Detroit Coke, 7819 W. Jefferson. The coke plant emits more than 100 tons of pollutants annually, mostly fine dust. It disposed of 870,000 pounds of hazardous waste into deep underground wells in 1987.



10. General Motors-Fisher Guide, 6307 W. Fort. The auto parts manufacturer emitted 57,750 pounds of pollution, including 12,750 pounds of carcinogens.

11. Michigan Consolidated Gas, 6500 W. Jefferson. A former coal gasification plant where soil is contaminated with benzene, copper, xylene, pyrene and zinc.

12. Revere Copper and Brass site, 5851 W. Jefferson. Abandoned industrial site, now owned by the city, features crumbling buildings, thousands of old tires and mounds of garbage. Twenty to 30 underground storage tanks contain gasoline, benzene and oils; some are thought to be leaking. Plans for a hazardous waste incinerator at the site are on hold.

13. Mistersky Power Plant, 5425 W. Jefferson. Black plumes of smoke frequently are seen coming from the smokestack of the coal-burning generating plant owned by the city. Its major regulated pollutant is sulfur dioxide.

14. Michigan Consolidated Gas, South Green Avenue. Soil and ground water at the former coal gasification plant are contaminated with benzene, xylene, toluene, cyanide, lead and mercury.

15. St. Mary's Peerless Cement, 9333 Dearborn. The cement company has received state permission to burn hazardous solvents as fuel in its cement kiln. Critics worry about the threat of explosion and toxic emissions.

16. Yellow Freight System, 7701 W. Jefferson. Soil and ground water at the trucking firm are polluted by diesel fuel and oil from underground tanks.

Other nearby polluters and hazardous waste facilities:

■ **McLouth Steel, Trenton.** Emitted 2.2 million pounds of hazardous chemicals in 1987.

■ **Ford Motor Co. Rouge complex, Dearborn.** 527,313 pounds.

■ **Rouge Steel, Dearborn.** 732,475 pounds.

■ **Marathon Petroleum, 1300 S. Fort.** 126,620 pounds.

■ **Crystal Mines, 12841 Sanders.** Owner wants to use the former salt mine to store 250,000 cubic yards of solid hazardous waste annually.

Sources: Wayne County Air Pollution Control Division, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Detroit News research.

Delray demographics

■ **Population:** 8,188, according to the 1980 census.

■ **Race:** 29 percent black, 11 percent Hispanic, 60 percent white.

■ **Household income:** \$9,372 (compared to city-wide \$14,000). Thirty-four percent of the population is below the federal poverty line (compared to 22 percent city-wide).

■ **Property values:** Average value of residential property is \$6,100 (compared to city-wide average of \$19,100).

Source: Detroit City Master Plan



DUANE BELANGER/The Detroit News
Children, gives air to son Raymond.

Some of our past work has indicated that mortality from asthma is higher among the poor than the

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asthma attacks, a 33 percent increase in 1979. The numbers rose 25 percent between 1982 and 1986.

ASTHMA — a condition that irritates the lungs' air passages to "itch" and constrict, making it difficult for sufferers to breathe and gasp for air — appears to be a particularly serious disease, killing blacks at nearly twice the rate of whites. It is the No. 1 reason for hospitalizations among children.

"Something's wrong," said Dr. Marvin Weiss, a health care sciences professor at George Washington University who tracked the disease at the National Center for Health